



June 12, 2021

Dear Fellow Marylander:

America is back, and most of the world likes us again, but they are worried about the state of our democracy.

This week, President Joe Biden made his first trip outside of this country since he was elected president. As you read this on Saturday morning, he is attending the annual G-7 Summit, a gathering of world economic powers – the U.S., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom, which is this year’s host.

The president’s travel comes as a new survey by the [Pew Research Center](#) shows a remarkable – but unsurprising – rebound in confidence that the U.S. would “do the right thing,” as well as favorability.

According to Pew, across 12 nations surveyed in 2020 and 2021, 75 percent now say they have “confidence” in President Biden versus a dismal 17 percent who expressed the same about former President Trump.

This is all good news as America gains back some of the global clout lost over the previous administration that repeatedly treated allies like annoyances and adversaries like long-lost buddies.

In areas like the response to COVID-19 and climate change, President Biden has shown that America can make positive progress at home and while also working with and helping other nations. The Trump era of American isolationism is over.

Not so good news is that most of those surveyed are “skeptical of how the U.S. political system functions.” There are enough of us here in the U.S. who also are skeptical of how our system functions, so maybe this also is no surprise. (i.e. partisan gridlock, campaign financing and dark money in politics, voter intimidation and deceptive tactics, lies on social media, ...)

Other results: less than a third of respondents say the United States is “currently setting a good example of democratic values,” and majorities or pluralities say “American democracy used to be a good example but has not been in recent years.”

I can understand their perspective. Separating young children from their parents at the border, blocking people from traveling to this country because of their religion, using federal law enforcement to spy on reporters and political opponents, watching Black men killed by police in video after video, and so much more, would make anyone think we had lost our way.

If we look just at elections, in 2016, one presidential candidate (Hillary Clinton) won the popular vote by about 3 million votes, but did not become president. It takes time to explain the complex Electoral College, but here in the U.S. or overseas, the follow up question always seems to be “shouldn’t the person who gets the most votes win?”

In 2020, the candidate who won the popular vote handily (Joe Biden by more than 7 million votes) did become president, but the losing candidate and some of his supporters remain delusional about overturning the legitimate election. The world watched on January 6 as the U.S. Capitol was overrun. There are many in our country who still are trying to downplay those horrific events that led to the death of six people. In truth, the images of that fateful day will shadow how our nation is viewed for years to come.

As I described last week, ahead of the 2022 midterm or legislative elections, Republican governors and state legislators in nearly every state are actively working to make it harder for the people who don’t vote for them to register and vote. These kinds of actions flirt with authoritarianism and are as undemocratic as you can get.

President Joe Biden, supported by a majority of the American people, is doing his part to stop the recent backslide away from democracy. Congress needs to do its part too by passing the *For the People Act*, which would expand and protect voter rights. Voting is foundational to any – and every – democracy.

Our nation is far from perfect, but when we can set aside partisanship and put the country first, we accomplish great things that have made our system of government, our freedoms and civil liberties the envy of the world. We cannot go backwards. It’s important for our own citizens and the future of our country. We also need to show the world the resiliency of American democracy.

America is back as the leader of the free world. If we lead by example, we can make an incredible difference in the lives of Americans and people around the globe.

Thank you for your time. Stay safe. Get vaccinated, if you have not already.

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